

## Social Marketing Urban Planning

### Background

Social marketing encompasses a strategic use of social media tools to engage stakeholders and provide actionable feedback to multiple areas of the organization. This results in deeper stakeholder relationships, enhanced experiences, shared agreement of business imperatives and streamlined operations. When properly deployed, social strategies stimulate cross-functional collaboration, accelerate change initiatives, drive innovation and provide a horizontal bridge that allows stakeholders, marketing and operations to forge a new model of cooperation.

Most organizations today are still in the experimentation stage with social media and community initiatives, and have yet to adopt a strategic framework for social marketing and operations. Often, multiple departments or divisions launch separate programs or campaigns with little regard or knowledge of what others are doing. This can lead to several scenarios:

- Dueling initiatives occur when more than one department or division simultaneously launches social media programs geared to the same audience. This can result in confusion and diminish the ROI of impacted programs.
- Stakeholders become fatigued in the face of multiple profiles, logins and reputation management systems. The lack of integration can ultimately minimize engagement. Deeper engagement occurs when an organization centralizes its outreach to a specific stakeholder segment.
- Missed opportunities for standard operating procedures across programs can potentially impact the risk/reward ratio of social marketing. Standards help streamline stakeholder experiences as well as mitigate risks associated with privacy, regulation and control.
- A “build-it-and-they-will-come” approach can lead to ghost towns. These trial and error campaigns result in haphazard or redundant customer engagement tactics. When this occurs, organizations tend to abandon programs rather than figure out how to maximize their collective impact.

Lack of leverage, collaboration and shared insight across business functions can lead to spending inefficiencies, a myopic view of stakeholder feedback, an inability to efficiently and effectively measure results, and unrealized potential. While individual social media programs can provide important learning and insight, their real promise will only be realized as part of an integrated social marketing strategy that has both internal and external nodes.

As social media experimentation evolves into integrated social marketing and social operations programs, organizations need to adopt an urban planning process to assure that it:

- Applies best practices across the enterprise.
- Understands the number and scope of current and planned social marketing initiatives.
- Maps programs by stakeholder groups.
- Centralizes frequency of outreach and engagement approach.
- Develops a single dashboard that rolls up all initiatives and aggregates learning.
- Provides actionable information to multiple departments in order to affect continuous improvement or adjustments.

Following is a brief overview of ComBlu's urban planning approach.

### **Urban Planning Process**

Urban planning organizes initiatives around stakeholder groups instead of product groups or organizational initiatives. Stakeholder neighborhoods are defined, building codes developed, municipal services organized, officials elected and neighborhood watch groups established.

#### **Step One: Identify and Analyze Stakeholder Segments**

- Map all current and future social media, community and customer engagement programs for each segment.
- Determine common purpose and needs of each segment.
- Determine owners of each initiative.
  - Learn full breadth of the outreach for each owner to segment or stakeholder groups.
  - Ascertain current process for outreach.
  - Clarify all elements of the integrated program, including goals and objectives.

#### **Step Two: Define Neighborhoods Around the Special Needs and Interests of Stakeholder Groups and Initiative Owners**

- Analyze points of overlap between the outreach cycle and the mission that owners have with a specific segment.
  - Organize common goals and objectives among owners as related to each segment.
  - Determine common needs for feedback, input and interaction with each segment.
- Identify owners who share affinity with the same group of multiple segments.
- Plan neighborhood to organize initiatives with complementary segments.
  - Develop single neighborhood for each segment that has minimal overlap with other segments.
  - Create a neighborhood with multiple “blocks” for segments sharing similar purpose or same needs and goals.
  - Strategically place owners who share affinity across multiple segments to facilitate coordination and collaboration.

### **Step Three: Define Municipal Services**

- Determine the best structure and tools for engaging each stakeholder group.
- Create an interface between the owners and the segments that allows each to leverage resources and learning.
- Ascertain which tools and programs can be co-funded and which are unique to a specific owner.

### **Step Four: Establish Building Codes**

- Decide common approaches to be applied enterprise-wide
  - Advocate identification.
  - Reputation management.
  - Member recruitment.
  - Engagement.
  - Measurement/ROI scorecard.
  - Operational feedback and insights.
- Establish rules of engagement for each segment or neighborhood.
  - Frequency of outreach.
  - How programs are deployed.
  - How to schedule outreach.
  - How results are captured and measured.
  - Reporting formats and dashboard cycle.
- Verify the community building blocks that will allow the greatest flexibility across initiatives.
- Establish how community-generated content is syndicated to other social destinations.
- Provide risk assessment guidelines and protocols.

### **Step Five: Elect Officials**

- Appoint a community manager for each neighborhood.
  - Organizes and schedules outreach and program deployment.
  - Tracks trends and monitors input.
  - Manages measurement cycle.
  - Shares aggregated dashboard to specific units and departments.
  - Monitors execution of feedback across the enterprise.
- Establish budget for shared social marketing services.
  - Determine budget and resource allocation.
- Oversee social and traditional program integration.

## **Step Six: Neighborhood Watch**

- Establish protocols for owners and community manager to discuss strategic impact of social marketing trends.
  - Include appropriate operations groups.
- Meet periodically to:
  - Share best practices.
  - Leverage resources.
  - Facilitate mentoring
  - Adjust protocols and practices based upon enterprise-wide experience.

Urban planning is crucial when organizations want to migrate from social media experimentation to a strategic social marketing and operations alliance. For further information about ComBlu's Social Marketing Urban Planning, contact: Kevin Lynch: [klynch@comblu.com](mailto:klynch@comblu.com). For additional thoughts on this topic visit our blog: [Lumenatti.comblu.com](http://Lumenatti.comblu.com).